

Play!

FOR THOSE WHO ARE GAME FOR A GOOD TIME

RESORT & CASINO
PECHANGA



PAINT
THE TOWN

white

Todd White's expressionistic
perspective contributes to the unique
quality that is the Pechanga Collection

On the Ball

Head out to a Major
League diamond for fun
at the ol' ballgame

High Society

The new High Limit
Salon at Pechanga
provides an exclusive
experience

A close-up photograph of a clear glass bowl. Inside the bowl, there is a vibrant yellow liquid, possibly lemon juice or a herbal infusion, which is slightly out of focus. Fresh green basil leaves are placed on top of the liquid, their texture and color clearly visible. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white surface. Overlaid on the image is the text 'well.' in a white serif font, followed by a large, stylized gold-colored '@' symbol that partially obscures the bowl's rim and the basil leaves.

well@

Thanks to its climate,
groves in nearby Temecula Valley
are a source of amazingly
good—and good for you!—
olive oil

iled

BY JUNE D. BELL • PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEN EASLEY

Imagine a fruit so versatile it can be transformed into nourishing soap, a savory salad dressing—or fuel for a lamp. Its thick juice, universally touted for its heart-healthy properties, is also routinely enjoyed fresh from the bottle.

Sound too exotic to be true? Not at all. You probably have this miracle liquid in your kitchen, in a bottle labeled “olive oil.” Few people know that the olive is a fruit, which makes olive oil a bona fide juice.

If you’ve traveled through the Temecula Valley near Pechanga Resort & Casino, you may have seen groves of olives basking in the sun. Like the Mediterranean regions of Italy, Spain, Greece and Southern France, this part of Southern California is blessed with long hours of sunshine, afternoon breezes and cool nights. It’s the perfect climate for olives, as the owners of the Temecula Olive Oil Company will attest. Each

year they produce about 6,000 gallons of top-quality olive oil.

The winter harvest of olives is transformed into oil by cold-press extraction and grinding to preserve the taste, color, bouquet and heart-healthy nutrients. The finished product is premium extra-virgin olive oil or EVOO, an appellation bestowed on “juice” produced without heat or chemicals from the olives’ first pressing. EVOO is the most costly and most prized olive extract—a flavorful, low-acid liquid with a golden hue and earthy, lush aroma.

It’s hard to believe that olive oil can be a healthy ingredient when each tablespoon packs 120 calories and 14 grams of fat. But olive oil, a staple of Mediterranean diets, has long been

Savor the Flavor

Herb-infused olive oils make a great dip for crusty bread, and they’re a key ingredient in flavorful marinades and salad dressings. It’s easy to make your own infused oils using either dried or fresh herbs. Try rosemary, basil, dill, garlic, chili peppers or peppercorns, mint or orange zest, used alone or in combination.

Fresh herbs will give your oil a more intense flavor, but the blend is more fragile and must be refrigerated and used within a few weeks. Oils flavored with dried herbs can last for a year if stored in a cool, dry place.

In a large pan, add clean, fresh or dried herbs to quality extra-virgin olive oil and warm gently (but never simmer or boil) on the stove for about five minutes to release the herbs’ flavors, says David Fuñe, Pechanga’s Executive Sous Chef. Let cool. Strain out the herbs or leave them in the oil.

Store your oil in a tall, thin bottle made of colored glass to help limit its exposure to light and air.



Temecula Olive Oil Company

An education about all things olive is just six minutes away from Pechanga Resort & Casino. The Temecula Olive Oil Company showcases its products at a tasting room and store in Old Town Temecula.

Visitors can learn how olive oil is made and sample infused oils and olives. The shop also sells balsamic vinegars and condiments as well as soaps and biscotti made with locally produced olive oil.

The store and tasting room, at 28653 Old Town Front St., are open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call (951) 693-0607 or visit temeculaoliveoil.com.



Temecula Olive Oil Company co-owner Catherine Pepe helps give customers a taste of Temecula.



praised for its health benefits. It's the oil richest in monounsaturated fat, which helps lower cholesterol and may help reduce high blood pressure.

To best maintain its health properties and flavor, enjoy the oil at room temperature. Drizzle it over a salad or blend it with vinegar to create a dipping sauce. Or make your own herb-infused oils (see "Savor the Flavor" on page 11).

Olive oil is a staple in the restaurants at Pechanga Resort & Casino, where it gives salad dressings and entrees a delicate flavor, a glossy finish and a full, rich mouth feel. "Because of its natural perfume and almost velvety texture, it's almost like butter," says David Fuñe, Pechanga's Executive Sous Chef. "It's like its own sauce."

Pechanga chefs use more than 7,000 gallons of olive oil each

year, much of it in the dishes at Paisano's Italian Ristorante. "Olive oil lends itself to Spanish and Italian cooking, which has robust flavors and thick sauces," Fuñe says.

Unlike wines, which build their bouquet as they age, olive oil's flavor and health benefits peak at production. A bottle of oil should be consumed within six months of opening to prevent degradation of flavor, says Nancy Curry, one of the owners of the Temecula Olive Oil Company. Even oil in a sealed bottle loses its potency, so use it within 18 months of purchase.

What better reason could there be for enjoying olive oil now? Curry encourages her customers to indulge, telling them, "Just feel good about the fact that you're using it and you're doing something good and healthy for your body." *

